

Dear Colleague:

I would like to cordially invite you to participate in the *National Summit of Rural America: A Dialogue for Renewing Promise* on February 26, 2010, from 9:00am until 5:00pm. The Rural Summit will take place on the campus of Jefferson College in Hillsboro, Missouri. Jefferson College is located approximately 45 minutes south of St. Louis, MO.

The Summit will be an opportunity for rural Americans to share their vision for creating a more prosperous and promising future for rural America. Farmers, ranchers, and foresters from around the country will have the opportunity to engage with key policymakers and community leaders to discuss the priorities and policies necessary to get rural America growing again. Participants will have the opportunity to dialogue in a close setting on a multitude of issues including stimulating new jobs in rural America, improving rural infrastructure, improving future farm competitiveness, developing new opportunities for small business, and encouraging innovation in renewable energy. National policymakers will take the valuable opinions they heard from the participants at the Summit back to Washington as they continue their work for a better rural America.

The *National Summit of Rural America: A Dialogue for Renewing Promise* would greatly benefit from your participation and I hope you can attend. In order to participate, please complete the registration form at <http://www.usda.gov/ruralsummit>. Please register early as capacity is limited and will be closed when capacity is reached.

I appreciate your dedication to the important and unique challenges facing rural America and I look forward to seeing you at this significant event.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary